

Research Article

Constructing Gender Consciousness through TikTok: A Social Representational Analysis of Patriarchal Culture in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The expansion of digital media has reshaped how social issues are articulated and negotiated in everyday life, including questions of gender and power. This study examines how gender consciousness is constructed through TikTok content by analyzing social representations of patriarchal culture on the Indonesian TikTok account @bincangperempuan. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study analyzes eight TikTok videos published between January and June 2025 using purposive sampling. Data were collected through content documentation and observation, focusing on narrative, visual, and discursive elements, and were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. The findings indicate that patriarchal culture is predominantly represented through women's everyday lived experiences rather than abstract or institutional discourse. Personal storytelling, dialogic communication, and audiovisual strategies function as key mechanisms in transforming individual experiences into shared social meanings. Audience interaction further extends this process by fostering collective reflection and reinforcing gender awareness through participatory dialogue. The study demonstrates that gender consciousness emerges as a socially mediated and gradual process, shaped through representation, interaction, and symbolic interpretation. Overall, the findings highlight TikTok's role as a social space that facilitates the articulation of gender awareness and symbolic resistance to patriarchal norms within contemporary Indonesian society.

Keywords: Digital Media; Gender Consciousness; Patriarchal Culture; Social representation; TikTok

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital media has fundamentally transformed the ways individuals communicate, construct social identities, and negotiate power relations in everyday life (Sukmayadi et al., 2024). Social media platforms are no longer merely channels for information exchange or entertainment; they have become social arenas where cultural meanings are produced, contested, and circulated. Within this digital environment, issues related to gender, power, and inequality increasingly emerge through personal narratives, visual expressions, and participatory interaction. These developments highlight the growing importance of digital media in shaping social awareness and public discourse, particularly among younger generations.

One persistent social issue that continues to shape everyday experiences is patriarchal culture. Patriarchy operates not only through formal institutions but also through deeply embedded social norms, expectations, and symbolic practices that regulate gender roles and relations (Isro'iyah & Riinawati, 2025). In many societies, including Indonesia, patriarchal values influence family life, education, workplace dynamics, and public interactions, often positioning women in subordinate or marginalized roles. While these structures may appear normalized and taken for granted, they are continuously reproduced and negotiated through communication practices in both offline and online spaces.

In recent years, social media has provided new opportunities for women to articulate their lived experiences and to challenge patriarchal norms through digital expression. Platforms such as TikTok enable users to share short-form audiovisual content that combines storytelling, visual symbolism, and emotional expression (Sonni et al., 2025). These features allow complex social issues to be communicated in accessible and relatable ways, transforming personal experiences into shared social narratives. As a result, social media can function as a space for raising awareness, fostering dialogue, and encouraging reflection on gender inequality and power relations.

Despite the growing body of research on gender representation and digital media, existing studies have largely focused on text-based platforms or Western sociocultural contexts. Research examining how gender consciousness is constructed through audiovisual, participatory platforms such as TikTok, particularly within non-Western settings, remains limited (Aran-Ramspott et al., 2024; Hunklinger & Limacher, 2025). Moreover, many studies emphasize the outcomes of digital

activism without sufficiently examining the representational processes through which gender awareness is formed and communicated at the level of everyday content production (Azizah, 2023; Fatimatuzzahro & Achmad, 2022). This gap suggests the need for qualitative studies that explore how meanings related to patriarchy and gender consciousness are socially constructed through digital media practices.

In the Indonesian context, the emergence of TikTok accounts that explicitly address women's experiences and critique patriarchal culture reflects a broader shift in how gender discourse is articulated in the public sphere (Isro'iyah & Riinawati, 2025; Sonni et al., 2025). One such account is @bincangperempuan, which consistently presents narratives and reflections on gender inequality and women's lived experiences. With 16,100 followers and 854,100 likes, the account demonstrates a notable level of public engagement, indicating its relevance within contemporary gender discourse. Through its content, @bincangperempuan illustrates how digital media can function as a social space where personal stories intersect with broader cultural critiques, enabling audiences to recognize and reflect upon patriarchal structures in everyday life.

Based on this context, this study aims to examine how gender consciousness is constructed through TikTok content by analyzing the social representations of patriarchal culture presented on the @bincangperempuan account. By focusing on narrative, visual, and discursive elements, the study seeks to understand how digital media functions as a space for articulating gender awareness and forms of digital resistance. This research contributes to social science scholarship by providing insight into the role of digital communication in shaping gender consciousness and by highlighting the significance of social media as a site of cultural negotiation within contemporary Indonesian society.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore how gender consciousness is constructed through digital media content on TikTok. A qualitative approach was selected because the research focuses on understanding social meanings, representations, and interpretations related to patriarchal culture, rather than measuring variables quantitatively (Amril & Azhar, 2025). The research object was the TikTok account @bincangperempuan, which consistently discusses issues of gender, women's lived experiences, and critiques of patriarchal norms in the Indonesian context. TikTok was chosen as the research setting due to its audiovisual and participatory characteristics, which allow users to communicate personal narratives and engage in public discussions on social and cultural issues. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. The sample consisted of eight TikTok videos published on the @bincangperempuan account between January and June 2025. The selected videos met the following criteria: (1) explicitly addressed issues of gender inequality, patriarchal culture, or women's experiences; (2) contained narrative or visual elements related to gender awareness; and (3) demonstrated audience engagement, indicating social relevance. Data collection was conducted through content documentation and observation. Each selected video was transcribed to capture spoken language and on-screen text. Visual elements such as images, text overlays, facial expressions, gestures, and editing styles were carefully observed and documented. In addition, captions and hashtags accompanying the videos were examined to provide contextual understanding of the content. Data analysis was carried out using qualitative descriptive analysis, which involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on identifying patterns of representation, recurring themes, and narrative strategies related to gender consciousness and patriarchal culture. Through this process, the study interprets how TikTok functions as a social space for articulating gender awareness and forms of digital resistance within contemporary Indonesian society.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Representation of Patriarchal Culture in Everyday Digital Narratives

The analysis of the selected TikTok videos indicates that patriarchal culture is predominantly represented through women's everyday experiences rather than through abstract or institutional explanations. The content consistently frames patriarchy as something that is lived, felt, and negotiated in daily interactions, such as within family relationships, romantic partnerships, workplaces, and social environments. These representations emphasize how patriarchal norms operate subtly, often disguised as cultural expectations, moral judgments, or "normal" social behavior (Rais, 2025). Women's experiences portrayed in the videos frequently reveal patterns of unequal treatment, including expectations to conform to traditional gender roles, disproportionate emotional labor, and social pressure to prioritize harmony over self-expression. Patriarchal norms are shown to function through language, attitudes, and interpersonal dynamics that limit women's agency while simultaneously normalizing inequality. By grounding these issues in concrete experiences, the content allows audiences to recognize patriarchy not as a distant concept but as a familiar social reality embedded in everyday life (Masrurroh et al., 2025).

Notably, the videos do not present patriarchy as a monolithic or uniform system. Instead, the representations suggest that patriarchal culture is dynamic and contextual, manifesting differently depending on social situations and relationships. This perspective encourages viewers to reflect on the multiple ways gender inequality is reproduced across

various spheres of life, reinforcing the idea that patriarchy is sustained through routine social practices rather than through overt domination alone.

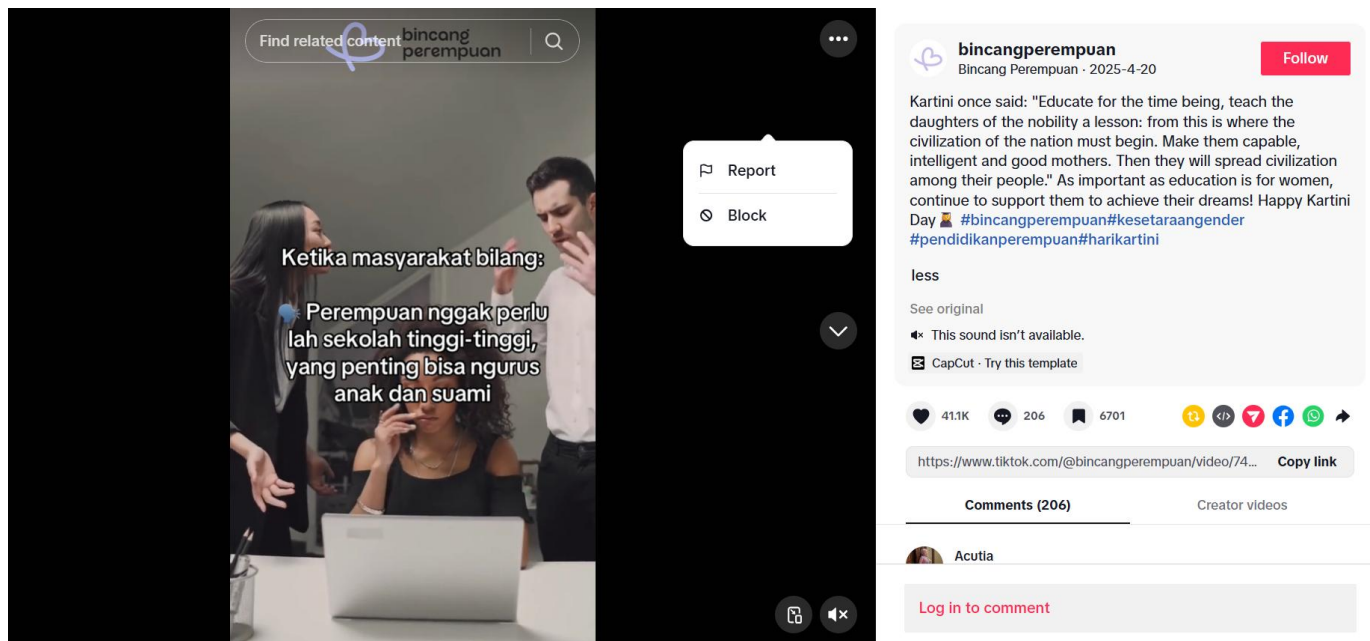


Figure 1. Representation of Patriarchal Culture

3.2 Narrative Strategies and the Social Construction of Gender Consciousness

3.2.1 Personal Storytelling as a Form of Social Reflection

One of the most prominent narrative strategies identified in the videos is personal storytelling. The content frequently adopts a testimonial format in which women recount specific moments of discrimination, realization, or emotional struggle related to gendered expectations (Aran-Ramspott et al., 2024). These narratives often begin with personal reflection and gradually expand toward broader social commentary, implicitly linking individual experiences to collective patterns of inequality (Nikmatullah, 2024). This storytelling strategy plays a crucial role in constructing gender consciousness. By sharing personal experiences in a public digital space, the creators challenge the privatization of gender-based issues and reposition them as social concerns. The act of narration itself becomes a reflective process, enabling both the storyteller and the audience to reinterpret everyday experiences through a gender-aware lens. As viewers encounter similar stories repeatedly, isolated incidents are reframed as structural problems rooted in patriarchal culture (Angel Lolita & Isnaini, 2023). At the same time, the testimonial narratives validate lived experience as a legitimate source of knowledge. Rather than relying on formal authority or expert discourse, the videos emphasize experiential knowledge, suggesting that awareness of gender inequality emerges through reflection on one's own life. This approach resonates strongly in digital environments, where authenticity and relatability often shape audience engagement.

3.2.2 Dialogic Tone and Reflexive Engagement

Alongside storytelling, many videos adopt a dialogic tone that actively invites audience reflection. Rhetorical questions, pauses, and direct address are commonly used to encourage viewers to think about their own experiences and to question normalized gender roles (Sair et al., 2025). This dialogic approach positions the audience not merely as passive consumers of content but as participants in an ongoing process of meaning-making. The reflexive nature of these interactions contributes to the formation of gender consciousness by fostering self-awareness and critical thinking. Viewers are prompted to reconsider everyday situations that may previously have been perceived as insignificant or unavoidable. Through this process, gender awareness emerges as a gradual and collective realization rather than as an externally imposed ideology.

3.3 Visual and Audiovisual Strategies in Communicating Gender Awareness

Beyond narrative elements, the videos employ visual and audiovisual strategies that significantly enhance the communication of gender-related meanings. Close-up shots, facial expressions, and body language are used to convey emotional intensity and vulnerability, reinforcing the authenticity of the narratives. Text overlays frequently highlight key phrases related to gender inequality or patriarchal norms, guiding audience interpretation and emphasizing critical points.

Color choices, lighting, and background music also contribute to the construction of meaning. Darker tones and subdued music are often used to represent emotional struggle or silencing, while brighter visuals and assertive text signal empowerment and realization. These visual contrasts function symbolically, illustrating the transition from unawareness to consciousness (Muhamad Hilal & Ribut Wahyudi, 2025). The short-form video format characteristic of TikTok further shapes how gender consciousness is communicated. The brevity of the videos requires concise storytelling, encouraging the distillation of complex social issues into clear and impactful messages. This format makes the content accessible and shareable, allowing gender-related critiques to circulate widely within the platform's algorithmic environment.

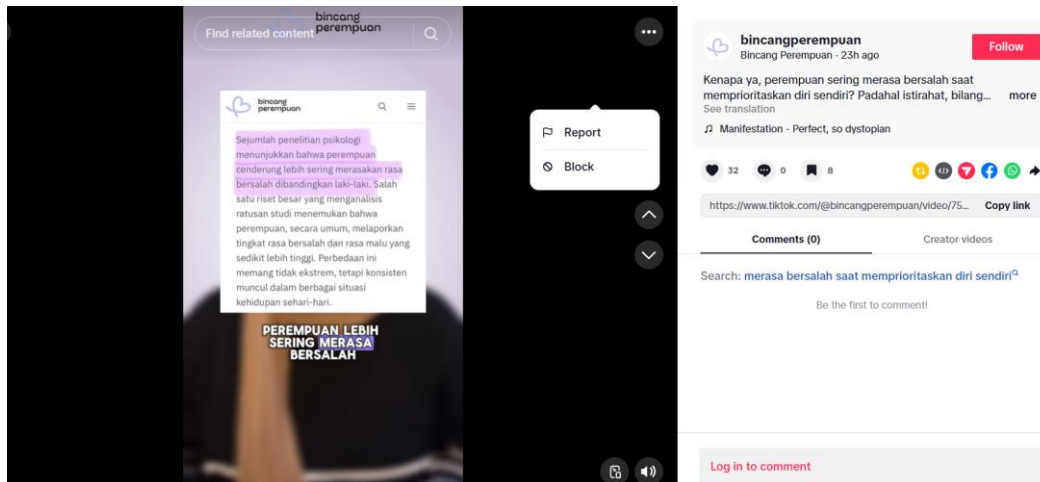


Figure 2. Narrative and Visual Strategies

3.4 Audience Interaction and Collective Meaning-Making

Audience engagement plays a central role in extending the representational process beyond the videos themselves. The presence of comments, reactions, and shares indicates that the content resonates with viewers and stimulates further discussion. Comment sections often become spaces for collective storytelling, where users share similar experiences, express solidarity, or articulate their own reflections on gender inequality (Kontolatou, 2025). These interactions suggest that gender consciousness is not constructed solely by content creators but is co-produced through participatory dialogue. The accumulation of shared experiences in the comment sections reinforces the perception that patriarchal culture is a widespread social issue rather than an individual problem. In this way, TikTok functions as a digital public sphere where gender awareness is negotiated and reinforced through communal interaction. Repeated engagement with similar content over time also contributes to a sense of continuity and learning. Viewers encounter recurring themes and narratives that gradually shape their understanding of gender relations. This process highlights how digital media can facilitate informal social learning through exposure, repetition, and interaction.

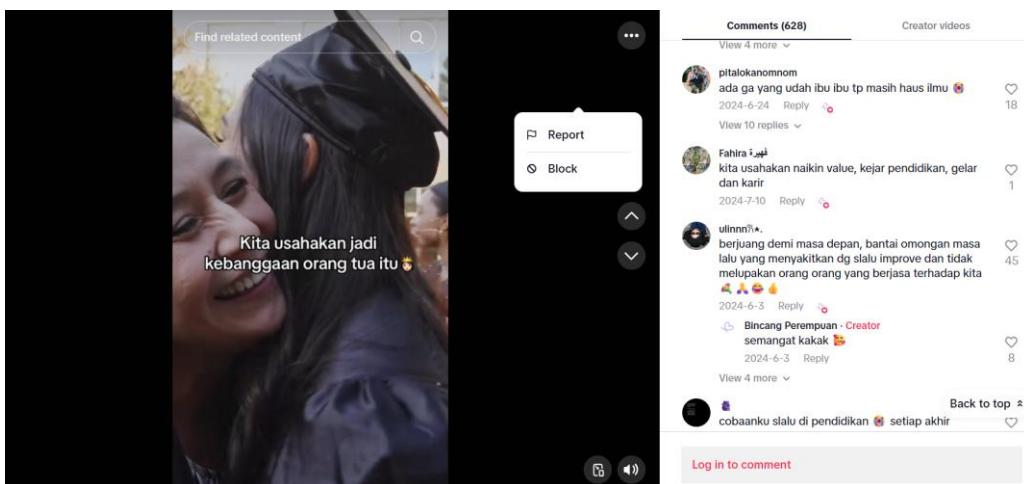


Figure 3. Audience Interaction

3.5 Gender Consciousness as a Form of Digital Resistance

The findings indicate that the content produced by @bincangperempuan operates as a form of digital resistance to patriarchal culture. This resistance is not expressed through overt political activism or organized movements but through everyday digital practices that challenge dominant gender norms. By naming experiences that are often silenced or dismissed, the videos disrupt the normalization of inequality and create space for alternative interpretations of gender relations. Gender consciousness, as constructed in these videos, emerges as a gradual and reflective process. Rather than offering prescriptive solutions, the content encourages awareness, recognition, and dialogue (Jalli, 2025). This approach positions resistance as a symbolic and cultural practice that reshapes how individuals perceive and interpret social reality. In this sense, TikTok serves as a social space where digital communication enables the articulation of gender awareness and the reconfiguration of power relations at the level of meaning. While such forms of resistance may not immediately transform institutional structures, they contribute to long-term cultural change by altering perceptions, validating women's experiences, and fostering collective awareness within contemporary Indonesian society.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the TikTok account @bincangperempuan plays a significant role in constructing gender consciousness through digital media content. The findings demonstrate that patriarchal culture is represented primarily through women's everyday experiences, making gender inequality visible as a lived social reality rather than as an abstract concept. Through personal narratives, dialogic communication, and audiovisual strategies, the content enables audiences to recognize how patriarchal norms are embedded in routine interactions, language, and social expectations. The study also shows that gender consciousness is constructed through a multi-layered representational process. Personal storytelling validates lived experience as a source of social knowledge, while visual and textual elements reinforce critical interpretations of gender relations. Audience interaction further extends this process by transforming individual narratives into collective awareness, indicating that meaning-making around gender issues is co-produced within digital environments. Overall, the findings highlight that TikTok functions not only as a platform for expression but also as a social space for symbolic resistance to patriarchal culture. Although the content does not directly aim to transform institutional structures, it contributes to long-term cultural change by reshaping perceptions, legitimizing women's experiences, and fostering reflective dialogue on gender inequality within contemporary Indonesian society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations for future research can be proposed. First, further studies may expand the scope of analysis by examining a larger number of content creators or comparing multiple TikTok accounts to explore variations in the construction of gender consciousness across different digital communities. Such comparative approaches would provide broader insights into patterns of representation and resistance in social media. Second, future research may focus on audience reception by investigating how viewers interpret, negotiate, and internalize gender-related messages encountered on TikTok. Incorporating interviews or surveys with audiences could help clarify the extent to which digital representations influence attitudes, awareness, or everyday practices related to gender equality. Finally, subsequent studies may explore cross-platform dynamics by comparing TikTok with other social media platforms, such as Instagram or YouTube, to examine how different technological affordances shape the communication of gender issues. These directions would contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of digital media in constructing social awareness and negotiating gender relations in diverse sociocultural contexts.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors discussed the results and contributed to from the start to final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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